Transforming Manufacturing in a Digital Economy Workgroup (Making it in Maryland)

December 14, 2021; 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Workgroup Members in Attendance:
- Delegate Lily Qi, Chair
- Senator Chris West
- Senator Jim Rosapepe
- Delegate Johnny Mautz
- Todd Sabin, Maryland Commerce
- Erin Roth, Maryland Labor
- Mike Galiazzo, RMI
- Lindsay Ryan, USM
- Wynne Briscoe, SBDC
- Suzy Ganz, MMAB
- Kelly Koermer, MACC
- Chris Cosgrove, RAMP MD
- Mike Kelleher, Maryland MEP
- Adam Porter, Fraunhofer USA
- Ken Sanchez, Chesapeake Specialty Products
- Jack Weber, Uptown Press
- April Richardson, Food Opportunity
- Annie Coble, JHU (on behalf of MICUA)

Staff:
- Heather Gramm, Maryland Commerce
- Richard Clinch, Jacob France Institute

Public:
- Katie Hardy, Office of Delegate Qi
- Sarah Kilmon, Office of Delegate Mautz
- Ryan Helwig, TEConomy Partners

Welcome and Approval of Minutes:
Delegate Qi gave welcome remarks and presented draft minutes from the November 2021 meeting. With no comments on the minutes, Jack Weber made a motion to approve, Mike Kelleher made the 2nd, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Delegate Qi provided a recap of the discussion from the November 2021 meeting, noting 2 interesting policy topics regarding current workers comp insurance and labor laws that impact worker age restrictions. She thanked Ken Sanchez for his email to the workgroup, reminding them of the primary focus and intent of the workgroup.

Maryland MEP/TEConomy Presentation:

Heather Gramm introduced Ryan Helwig of TEConomy Partners. TEConomy has been engaged by the Maryland MEP to develop a manufacturing strategy. The presentation included key findings from both qualitative and quantitative evaluation, a SWOT analysis for Maryland manufacturing, and preliminary recommendations.

Review of Interim Report:
Heather Gramm presented a draft interim report for the Workgroup's review and discussion. The interim report is due to the Maryland General Assembly in December of 2021. The Workgroup members expressed a strong desire not to wait for the final report in order to take action and make recommendations. It was agreed that the January meeting should include discussion of possible legislative actions during the 2022 session that would achieve quick results toward the purpose of this Workgroup. Specific areas for discussion included 179 pass-through limitations, enhanced use of the R&D tax credit to support manufacturing innovation, and key infrastructure investments such as improved access to broadband. A state fund to support technology adoption for manufacturers was also discussed as a possible recommendation, and the Workgroup asked for examples of legislation from other states with similar funds. The state's recent creation of an Office of Statewide Broadband, and related investments in broadband infrastructure was discussed, and it was agreed that a future presentation on those efforts would be valuable for the Workgroup members.

After discussion, no changes were recommended to the draft. Jack Weber made a motion to approve, Senator Rosapepe seconded the motion, and the Interim Report was unanimously approved for submission to the Governor and General Assembly.

Stanley Black & Decker Virtual Tour:
Mike Galiazzo discussed plans to organize a virtual tour of the Stanley Black & Decker Manufactory in January for interested members of the Workgroup. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Closing Remarks:
Delegate Qi thanked the members for their valuable insights. She noted that the MD MEP is associated with NIST, and that small businesses can use federal facilities and leverage the labs and technologies – perhaps there is a partnership that could be established to create a test bed through collaboration with federal assets in Maryland. She noted that meetings during the 2022 Legislative Session would be held on Mondays, and the next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2022 at 10:00am. Meetings will remain virtual.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am